VVestward for Smelts.

OR,

The VVater-mans Fare of mad-merry VVestern *wenches, whose tongues albeit like Bell-clappers,* they neuer leaue Ringing, yet their Tales are sweet, *and will much content you.*

VVritten by Kinde *Kit* of *Kingstone.*

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To The Reader.

READER, for thy pleaſure haue I (this once) left my Oare and Stretcher, and ſtretched my wit, to ſet downe the honeſt mirth of my merry Fare Fiſhwiues: if I haue pleaſed thee, I am fully contented, and aske no more for my Fare: if not, I haue loſt both my labour, and the reward I hoped for from thee, and doe vow neuer more to trouble you with any other words than, *Will you haue a paire of Oares?* But my hopes are better, cauſe you (looking at my hands) for no other then Freſh-water Poetry, ſhall not be deceiued: and therefore not offended. So without any fawning tricks (which are things vſed too much in theſe times) I take my leaue, wiſhing thee health; and if thou ſit hard, my Boats Cuſhions. Farewell.

Yours to command,

Kinde Kit of Kingſtone.

VVESTVVARD FOR SMELTS.

In that selected time of the yeere, when no man is suffered to be a Mutton-monger, without a spectall priuiledge from those in authoritie: and no man is licensed to inioy a flesh-bit, but those who are so weake, that the very sight contents their appetite: yet euery man desireth flesh that is no whore-master. When Butchers goe to Beare-baytings on Thursdayes, leauing their Wiues and Prentises making pricks, in shops halfe shut vp, like houses infected of the plague: when at the same time Fishmongers are in their height of pride, dashing water in their ill-sented street, like a troope of Porpoises at Flushing head. When the Cookes spits are hung vp like Pikes in a Court of garde, and their dripping pans (like Targets in a country Iustices Hall) lies mouldie for want of vse. At this time of the yeere, the Pudding-house at Brookes-wharfe is watched by the Hollanders Eeles-ships, least the inhabitants, contrarie to the Law, should spill the blood of innocents, which would be greatly to the hinderance of these Butter-boxes. In briefe, it is the Kitchin-stuffe wines vacation, which makes them runne to the hedge for better maintenance. Euery one knowes this was Lent-time, a time profitable (onely) for those that deale with liquid commodities: for none but Fish must be eaten, which neuer doth digest well (as some Physicions of this time hold opinion) except it swimme twice after it comes forth the water: that is, first in Butter, so to be eaten: then in Wine or Beere after it is eaten: Now how chargeable this last liquor is, aske in prisons of prodigals who haue paid well for it: and how profitable to the sellers, aske of those Aldermen that haue had their beginning by it.

In this time of Lent, I being in the Water-mans Garrison of

Quéene-hiue (whereof I am a Souldier) and hauing no imploiment, I went with an intent to incounter with that most valiant and hardy Champion of Quéne-hiue, commonly called by the name of the Red Knight; one who hath ouerthrowne many, yet neuer was himselfe dismounted, or had the least foyle: yet doth hee deny to grapple with none, but continually standeth ready to oppose himselfe against any that dare be his opposite, against whom he hath alway the better: for if they yeeld to him in the right of his conquest, hee taketh from them a certaine summe of money, according to the time that they haue held out: but if they scorne to yeeld, hee not onely taketh from them their goods, but likewise with his sore blowes he taketh from them their sences, making them often to fall at his Castle gate for dead: voiding at the mouth abundance of filth caused by his strokes.

The Red Knight is an Alehouse Signe at Queene-hiue, where the Watermen vse to tipple.

I had not long held combate with this Knight, but my man came running in, telling mee he had a Fare West-ward. This newes made me giue ouer the combate, but with some small losse, for hee would not lose his ancient priuiledge; so I giuing him two pence, had free liberty to passe his gates, where I found my Fare, which were a company of Westerne Fishwiues, who hauing made a good market, with their heads full of Wine, and their purses ful of coine, were desirous to goe homeward. We agreed quickly, and the Boy layd the Cushions: I put them in the Boat, and we launched into the deepe, Neptune bee our speed, Westward for Smelts. Hauing passed the troublesome places of the Thames (where the Wherries runne to and fro like Weauers shuttles) and being at Lamberh, I might perceiue all my Fishwiues begin to nod. I fearing they were in a sound, with my Oare sprinkled a little coole water in their faces, which made them all to awake: which I perceiuing, bid them rowze themselues vp, and to continue their mirth, and keepe them from melancholy sleepe, and I would straine the best voice I had. They prayed me so to doe: but yet not to clog their eares with an old Fidlers Song, as Riding to Rumford, or, All in a Garden Greene. I said, I scorned so to do, for I would giue them a new one, which neither Dunke, Fidler, or Ballad-singer had euer polluted with their vnsauourie breath: the subiect was, I told them, of a Seruingman & his Mistris. They liked the subiect well, and intreated me to proceed, promising that each of them would requite my

Song

Song with a Tale. I said, I was content, and would thinke well of their requitals. So they being all still, I began in this manner:

FAirer then the fairest,
Brighter then the rarest,
Was the comely creature which I saw.
Her lookes they were attractiue,
And her body actiue,
All beholders senses for to draw.
I honour still this comely creature,
And euer will doe while I liue:
And for her grace and goodly feature,
All honours due to her I giue.

When I first beheld her
Had *Cupid* will'd her,
For to fauour him that lou'd her best:
Ioyes had me possessed,
Sorrowes had not prest,
On my grieued heart that takes no rest.
I thinke on her with adoration,
I musing set vpon her beauty,
On her is all my meditation,
Yet more to her were but my duty.

She her selfe is witty,
All her parts are pretty,
Nature in her forme hath shewed her skill:
Her bright beauty maz'd me,
All her parts well pleas'd me:
For of pleasant sights I had my fill.
Then 'gan her hand for to vncouer
Her whitest neck, and roundest pap:
Then gan I farder to discouer
Most pleasing sights, yet way'd my hap.

Still I stood obscured,
And these sights indured:
Yet I to this goddesse durst not speake.

Had

Had I made a tryall,
Her most sad deniall,
My obseruant heart oh it would breake.
Therefore will I rest contented,
With priuate pleasures that I viewed,
And neuer with loue will be tormented,
Yet loue I her, for that she shewed.

Hauing thus ended, I asked them how they liked my Song: They said little to it. At last, Well, quoth a venerable Matron (or rather a Matron of Venery) that sate on a Cushion at the vpper end of the Boat, let vs now performe our promises to him in telling euery one her Tale: since I shall land first, I will begin first: so the Waterman shall be sure of his requitall promised by vs; which shall bee Fishwiues Tales, that are wholesome, though but homely: so set merrily to Brainford, my masters.

I liked this well, and 'cause I would heare them all out, I made but slow haste: And 'cause you shall haue some knowledge what rare piece this Fishwife of Brainford was, I will describe her best and outward parts.

This Fishwife stout,
That led the rout,
At *Brainford* dwelt.
She sometime dealt,
With flesh exchange:
But now (though strange)
She gaue it ore,
And knew no Whore.
She was well set,
Her body met,
Two yards was found:
Her head from ground
Was not so hie.
She went awry.
Her face was great.
She stunke of sweat,
Let it suffice,
She had large eyes:
And a low brow,
Much like a Sow
That sindg'd had bin,
Appear'd her chin:
For it was hayr'd.
Her nose was mar'd
For 't had a gap,
By great mis-hap:
As you shall heare,
Then giue good eare.

The Fishwifes Tale of *Brainford*.

IN Windsor, not long agoe, dwelt a Dumpter man, who had to wife a very faire (but something wanton) creature; over whom (not without cause) he was something iealous, yet had hee neuer any proofe of her inconstancie: but he feared he was, or should be a Cuckold, and therefore preuented it so much as he could by restraining her libertie: but this did but set an edge to her wanton appetite, and was a prouocatiue to her Lust (for what women are restrained from, they most desire) for long hee could not hold his watchfull eye ouer her, 'cause his businesse call'd him alway, which alway lay farre from home. He being to depart from home, bethought himselfe what he were best to do: put another in trust with his wife he durst not: (for no greater shame is there to a man, then to be knowne iealous ouer his wife) himselfe could tarry no longer at home for feare of losing his place, and then his liuing was gone: thus was hee troubled in minde, not knowing what to doe. Now he repented himselfe that he had vsed his wife so ill, which had giuen her cause to hate him, and procure him a mischiefe: for he saw that he had no other way now to take, but to put his credit into his wiues hands; therefore the day and night before hee went from home, he vsed her extraordinary kindely, making more on her then the first day they were maried. His wife maruelled at this sodaine change, and though she liked this vsage well, yet she thought neuer the better of him in her heart, and in her outward carriage bare her selfe as before: which was euer mouefully in his sight. The morning being come that he was to depart from home (after many sweet kisses, and kinde imbraces giuen by him) hee said: Sweet honey, I cannot blame thee, that thou takest my vsage heretofore vnkindly: but if thou knewest (as I meane to shew thee) what my intent was, thou wilt change that bad thought for a better liking of me. Know then, my loue, that I vsed thee thus strangely, to know how deepe thy loue was settled on me: (for to vse a friend frowardly, tryes her loue, in forbearance of his iniuries: and in seeking to please him) which I haue found by proofe immoueable. Oh my more then deare wife, thy loue is fixed sure on me, and not to be remoued by any crosse whatsoeuer. Thus did hee seeke to vnsnare

himselfe, but was caught faster: for his wife perceiuing his iealousie, vowed to be reuenged, and giue him good and sufficient cause to thinke himselfe a Cuckold: and with very ioy to see him creepe to her after this manner, she let fall a few teares, which proceeded rather of inward laughter, then any griefe. Shee seeing this, thought they proceeded from pure loue, yet did hee not thoroughly trust her, but minded to returne ere she was aware of him. To be short, they broke their fasts together, and louingly parted: His wife beeing glad of this, sent for a woman in the towne, one that was the procurer of her friend, to whom she told all that had hapned betweene her Husband and her selfe: requesting her in all haste to giue her friend notice that her husband was now from home, and that shee would meete him, when and whereseuer he pleased. The old woman glad of this, gaue her Louer to vnderstand of this good hap, who soone met her at a place in the towne, where they vsually met, where they plumed the Sumpter-mans Cap: there she gaue the old Woman a key which would open her doore, by which meanes shee might come to the speech of her at any time of the night without knocking: so carefull was she to keepe her selfe cleere and spotlesse in the eyes of her neighbours: who would not haue thought well of her, if they had heard noise at her doore in the night, and her husband from home; hauing passed the time away in louing complements, they parted, each going their seuerall wayes: not any one of her neighbours mistrusting her, she bare her selfe so cunningly modest. Her husband being on his iourny, following his Sumpter-horse, thought his wife at home working like a good huswife (when perchance she was following a Stalion she tooke more delight in, then he poore man did in his) yet put he no more trust in her then he was forced to doe: for hee dispatches his businesse so soone as hee could, and returned three dayes sooner then he promised her. When he came home, he knocked at the doore: there might he knocke long inough for his Wife, who was knocking the Vintners pots with her Louer. He hauing no answere, began to curse and ban, bidding a pox on all Whores: his neighbours began to perswade him, telling him that she went but new forth, & would returne suddenly againe: and iust at that instant came she homeward, not knowing her good man was returned, for she had appointed the old Woman to come and call her that night: Seeing her Husband, you may iudge

what

what a taking this poore Woman was in: back she durst not goe for that would haue but sharpened his rage: and if shee went forward, she was sure of some seuere punishment: yet taking courage, on she went: Her husband entertained her with halfe a dozen gadding Queans, and such like words, & she excused her selfe so well as she could But to be briefe, in a dozes they went: then made he the doore fast, and came to her (who was almost dead with feare that her close play now would be descride) saying; Thou Whore, long time haue I doubted this loosenes in thy life, which I now haue plaine proofe of by thy gadding in my absence, and bee thou at this present looke for no other thing at my hands, then reward fit for so vilde a creature as a Whore is. At these words she would haue shreeked out: but he stopped her mouth, pulling withall a trolly Dagger from his side, vowing to colour it with her bloud, if shee did but offer to open her mouth. The poore creature forced more with feare, then with duty, held her peace, while hee bound her to a post hard by the doore, vowing she should stand there all night, to coole her hote bloud. Hauing done this, about ten of the clock he went to bed, telling her that he meant not to sleepe, but watch her if she durst once open her mouth: but he was better then his word, though hee held it not, for he was no sooner in bed but he fell fast asleepe, being wearied with riding. Long had not he beene so, but the old Woman came & opened the doore with the key that the Dumpter-mans wife had giuen her, and was going to the bed which the Dumpter-man lay vpon, to call his Wife: but as she passed by, the poore woman that was bound to her good behauiour, call'd her by her name (yet very softly) saying, Mother Ione, I am heere, mother Ione, pray goe no further, and speake softly: for my Husband, mother Ione, is a bed. This good old Woman went to her, and finding her bound, asked her the cause: to whom the afflicted Wife related (with still speech, which is contrary to womens nature) euery circumstance, for she knew her Husband fast enough for three houres. Is that all, said the old Woman? then feare not but you shal enioy your friends bed: with that she vnlooſed her. The Dumpter-mans wife maruelled what she meant to doe, saying, Mother, what meane you? this is not the way that I must take to cleere my selfe. Alas, should he wake and finde me gone to morrow he will kill mee in his rage. Content you, said the old Wife, I will bide the brunt of all: and heere will

I stand tyed to this post till you returne, which I pray let be so soone as you can. This wanton Wife praised her counseli, and imbraces the same, and leaving the old Woman bound (as she desired) in her place, she went to her lusty Lover, who long time had expected her: to whom she related her husbands vnluckie comming home, her ill vsage and the old Womans kindnesse: for all which he was sorrie, but could not mend, onely hee promised to reward this kinde woman, call'd Mother Ione: so leaving that talke they fell to other.

The Sumpter-man, who could not soundly sleepe, because still he dreamed of Hornes and Cuckolds, wakened not long after his wife was gone: and being wakened, he fell to talking after this manner: Now you queane, is it good gadding? Is your hote blood cooled yet with the cold ayre? Will your insatiable desires be allayed with hunger and cold? if they be not, thou arrant Whore, I will tye this thus vp, not onely nine dayes, but nineteene times nine dayes, till thou hast lost this hote and damnable pride of thine: Ile doo't, Whore, I will, I sweare I will. This good old Woman hearing him raile thus frantickly, wished (with all her heart) her selfe out of doores, and his Wife in her old place. Shee durst not speake to him, for feare she should be knowne by her speech to bee another, and not his Wife: and hee lay still calling to her, asking if her hote desires were cooled. At length hee hearing her make no answere, thought her to be sullen: and bid her speak to him, or else she should repent it: (yet durst not the old wife speake.) He hearing no speech, rose vp, and tooke his knife, sweating hee would marke her for a Whore, and with those words he ranne to her, and cut her ouer the nose: all this the old Woman indured quietly, knowing her words would haue but increased her punishment. To bed went he againe, with such words as hee vsed before, saying, that since her blood would not coole, he would let it out. Hauing lyen a while, he fell asleepe, leaving old Ione bleeding at nose, where shee stood till three of the clocke in the morning: at which time this honest Nasle (the Sumpter-mans wife) came home: when she had quietly opened the doore, she went to the old Woman, asking her how shee had sped? Marry, quoth she, as I would wish my enemies to speed, ill: I pray vnbinde me, or I shall bleed to death. The good wife was sorry to heare that she had receiued such hurt, but farre gladder that it did not happen vnto her selfe: so vnbinding her, she stood in her place.

Home-

Homeward went the old Woman, bethinking her selfe all the way how she might excuse that hurt to her Husband: At last she had one (for excuses are neuer further off women then their apron strings) which was this: she went home to her husband, who was a Mason, and went every morning betimes to worke out of the towne; him she calleth, telling him it was time to goe to worke; the silly man rose, and being ready to goe, he missed a Chisell (which his wife had hid) and went vp and downe groping for it in the darke, praying his Wife to helpe him to looke it. She made as she had sought for it, but in stead of that, she gaue him a sharpe knife (which a Butcher had brought to grinding) he catching at this suddenly (as one being in haste) cut all his fingers, so that with anger he threw the knife to the earth, cursing his Wife that gaue it him. Presently vpon ỹ fall of the knife, she cryed out that shee was hurt. The Mason being amazed, went and lighted a Candle, and returning, he found his wiues nose cut. The silly man (perswading himselfe that hee had done it with hurling the knife) intreated her for to forgiue him, for he protested that hee thought her no hurt when hee did it: then fetched he a Surgeon who cunningly stitched it vp, that it was whole in a short time. The Sumpter-man all this while did little thinke how he was beguiled: who when he was awaked, lighted a Candle to see what hurt he had done his Wife in his rage: he comming neere her, and seeing her face whole, stood in a maze, not knowing what to thinke on it, for he was sure that he had cut her nose. His Wife seeing him stand in this maner, asked him what he did ayle, & why he gazed so on her as though he knew her not? Pardon mee, Wife, quoth he, for this night hath a miracle beene wrought: I doe see plainely that the heauens will not suffer the Innocent to suffer harme. Then fetched hee his knife which was all bloudy, saying, Deare Wife, with this knife did I giue thee this present night, a wound on the face, the which most miraculously is whole: which is a signe thou art free, and spotlesse, and so will I euer hold thee. His Wife said little (for teares of laughing) onely shee said, she knew heauen would defend the Innocent: so they went to bed louingly together, he vowing neuer to thinke amisse on her. So had she more libertie then before, & the old had gold for her wound, which wound was so well cured (I thanke God) that you can scarce see it on my nose. Heereat they all laughed, saying, she had told a good Tale

for her selfe: at which she bit her lip, to thinke how she was so very a foole to betray her selfe. But knowing that excuses would but make her more suspected, she held her tongue, giuing the next leaue to speake.

The next that sate to her was a Fishwife of Standon the Greene, who saw her Tale was pleasant, but scarce honest: shee taxed women with too much immodestie: to salue which, she would tell the aduentures of a poore Gentlewoman, that was vsed vnkindly by her Husband. They all liked this well, and intreated her to procede: which she willingly consented vnto.

The description of the Fishwife of *Standon* the Greene.

This wife was leane,
Shee went full cleane.
Her breath not strong,
Her body long.
She looked pale,
Yet lou'd good Ale.
Her teeth were rot,
Her tongue was not.
Well could she chat
Of this and that.
Her lips were white,
And sharpe her sight.
Her cheekes were thin,
So was her chin,
And something hook'd,
Her nose was crook'd:
They would haue kist,
But that they wist,
Her mouth was let,
That twixt was set.
Twice thirtie yeeres,
Sha'd past with cares,
And honest life,
And still was Wife.
This Wife was wise,
But not precise:
Thus gan she tell:
Pray marke it well.

Her Tale.

In the troublesome raigne of King Henry the first, there dwelt in Waltam (not farre from London) a Gentleman, which had to Wife a creature most beautifull: so that in her time there were few found that matched her, (none at all that excelled her) so excellent were the gifts that nature had bestowed on her. In body was she not onely so rare, and vnparaleld, but also in her gifts of minde: so that in this creature it seemed, that Grace and Nature strone who should excell each other in their gifts toward her. The

Gentle-

Gentleman her Husband thought himselfe so happy in his choise, that he beleeued, in choosing her, he had tooke hold of that blessing which heauen proffereth euery man once in his life. Long did not this opinion hold for currant; for in his height of loue, he began so to hate her, that he sought her death: the cause I will tell you. Hauing businesse one day to London, he tooke his leaue very kindly of his Wife, and accompanied with one man, he rode to London: being toward night, he tooke vp his Inne, and to be briefe, he went to supper amongst other Gentlemen. Amongst other talke at table, one tooke occasion to speake of women, and what excellent creatures they were, so long as they continued loyall to man. To whom answered one, saying: This is truth, Sir: so is the Diuell good so long as he doth no harme, which is meaner: his goodnes and womens loyaltie will come both in one yeere, but it is so farre off, that none in this age shall liue to see it.

This Gentleman louing his Wife dearely (and knowing her to be free from this vnciuill Gentlemans generall taxation of women) in her behalfe, said: Sir, you are too bitter against the sexe of women, and doe ill (for some ones sake that hath proued false to you) to taxe the generalitie of women-kinde with lightnesse: and but I would not be counted vnciuill amongst these Gentlemen, I would giue you the reply that approued vntruth deserueth, you know my meaning, Sir: construe my words as you please: excuse me, Gentlemen, if I be vnciuill: I answere in the behalfe of one, who is as free from disloyaltie, as is the Sunne from darknes, or the fire from cold. Pray, Sir, said the other, since wee are opposite in opinions, let vs rather talke like Lawyers, that wee may bee quickly friends againe, then like Souldiers which end their words with blowes. Perhaps this woman that you answere for, is chaste, but yet against her will: for many women are honest, 'cause they haue not the meanes, and opportunitie to bee dis-honest (so is a Thiefe true in prison, 'cause he hath nothing to steale:) had I but opportunitie, and knew this same Saint you so adore, I would pawne my life and whole estate, in a short while to bring you some manifest token of her disloyaltie. Sir, you are yong in the knowledge of womens slights, your want of experience makes you too credulous: therefore be not abused. This speech of his made the Gentleman more out of patience then before, so that with much

abse he held himselfe from offering violence: but his anger beeing a little ouer, hee said, Sir, I doe verily beleeue, that this vaine speech of yours proceedeth rather from a loose and ill manner'd minde, then of any experience you haue had of womens loosenes: and since you thinke your selfe so cunning in that (diuelliſh art) of corrupting womens chastitie, I will lay downe heere a hundred pounds, against which you shall lay fifty pounds, and before these Gentlemen I promise you, if that within a moneths space you bring me any token of this Gentlewomans disloyaltie (for whose sake I haue spoken in the behalfe of all women) I doe freely giue you leaue to inioy the same: conditionally you not performing it, I may enioy your money. If that it be a match, speake, and I will acquaint you where she dwelleth: and besides, I vow, as I am a Gentleman, not to giue her notice of any such intent that is toward her. Sir, quoth the man, your proffer is faire, and I accept the same: so the mony was deliuered into the Maſt of the houſe his hands, and the sitters by were witnesses: so drinking together like friends, they went every man to his chamber. The next day this man hauing knowledge of the place, rid thither, leauing the Gentleman at the Inne, who being assured of his wiues chastitie, made no other account but to winne the wager, but it fell out otherwise: for the other vowed either by force, policie, or free will to get some Iewell or other toy from her, which was enough to perswade the Gentleman that he was a Cuckold, and win the wager he had laid. This Villaine (for hee deserued no better stile) lay at Waltam a whole day, before he came to the sight of her: at last he espyed her in the fields, to whom he went and kiſſed her (a thing no modeſt woman can deny:) after his salutation, he said, Gentlewoman, I pray pardon me if I haue beene too bold, I was intreated by your Husband which is at London (I riding this way) to come and see you, by me he hath sent his commends to you, with a kinde intreat that you would not be discontented for his long absence, it being serious businesse that keepes him from your sight. The Gentlewoman very modeſtly bade him welcome, thanking him for his kindnes, withall telling him that her Husband might command her patience so long as he pleased. Then intreated shee him to walke homeward, where shee gaue him such entertainment as was fit for a Gentleman, and her husbands friend. In the time of his abiding at her

house,

houſe, he oft would haue ſinged her in priuate talke, but ſhe perceiuing the ſame, (knowing it to bee a thing not fitting a modeſt woman) would neuer come in his ſight but at meales, and then were there ſo many at boord, that it was no time for to talke of loue-matters: therefore hee ſaw hee muſt accompliſh his deſire ſome other way: which he did in this manner: He hauing lyne two nights at her houſe, and perceiuing her to bee free from luſtfull deſires, the third night he fained himſelfe to be ſomething ill, and ſo went to bed timelier then he was wont. When he was alone in his chamber, he began to think with himſelfe that it was now time to do that which he determined, for if he tarried any longer, they might haue cauſe to think that he came for ſome ill intent, and wanted opportunity to execute the ſame: therefore he reſolued to doe ſomething that night, that might winne him the wager, or vtterly bring him in deſpaire of the ſame. With this reſolution he went to her chamber, which was but a paire of ſtaires from his, and finding the doore open, hee went in, placing himſelfe vnder the bed. Long had he not lyne there, but in came the Gentlewoman with her maiden, who hauing bin at prayers with her houſhold, was going to bed. She preparing her ſelfe to bedward, laid her Head-tyre & thoſe Iewels ſhe wore, on a little table there by: at length hee perceiued her to put off a littel Crucifix of gold, which dayly ſhe wore next to her heart: this Iewell he thought fitteſt for his turne, and therefore obſerued where ſhe did lay the ſame. At length the Gentlewoman hauing vntyred her ſelfe, went to bed: her Maid then bolting of the doore, tooke the Candle, and went to bed in a withdrawing roome onely ſeparated with Arras. This Villaine lay ſtill vnder the bed, liſning if hee could heare that the Gentlewoman ſlept: at length he might heare her braue her breath long: then thought hee all ſure, and like a cunning Villaine roſe without noiſe, going ſtraight to the Table, where finding of the Crucifix, he lightly went to the doore, which he cunningly vnbolted; all this performed he with ſo little noiſe, that neither the Miſtris nor the Maid heard him. Hauing gotten into his Chamber, he wiſhed for day, that he might carry this Iewell to her husband as ſigne of his wiues diſloyaltie: but ſeeing his wiſhes but in vaine, he laid him downe to ſleepe: happy had ſhee beene had his bed proued his graue. In the morning ſo ſoone as the ſeruants were ſtirring, he roſe and went to the Horſe-keeper, praying him to

helpe him to his Horse, telling him that hee had toke his leaue of his Mistris the last night. Mounting his horse, away rid he to London, leauing the Gentlewoman in bed: who when she rose, attiring her selfe hastily (cause one tarried to speake with her) missed not her Crucifix: so passed she the time away, as shee was wont other dayes to doe, no whit troubled in minde, though much sorrow was toward her: onely shee seemed a little discontented that her ghest went away so vnmannerly, she vsing him so kindely. So leauing her, I will speake of him, who the next morning was betimes at London; and comming to the Inne, hee asked for the Gentleman, who then was in bed, but he quickly rose and came downe to him, who seeing him return'd so suddenly, he thought hee came to haue leaue to release himselfe of his wager: but this chanced otherwise: for hauing saluted him, he said in this manner: Sir, did not I tell you that you were too yong in experience of womans subtilties, and that no woman was longer good then she had cause, or time to doe ill? this you beleeued not, and thought it a thing so vnlikely, that you haue giuen me a hundred pounds for the knowledge of it. In briefe, know, your Wife is a woman, and therefore a wanton, a changeling: to confirme that I speake, see heere (shewing him the Crucifix:) know you this? if this be not sufficient proofe, I will fetch you more.

At the sight of this, his blood left his face, running to comfort his faint heart, which was ready to breake at the sight of this Crucifix, which he knew she alwayes wore next her heart, and therefore he must (as he thought) goe something neere, which stole so priuate a Iewell. But remembring himselfe, he cheeres his spirits, seeing that was sufficient proofe, and he had wonne the wager, which hee commanded should be giuen to him. Thus was the poore Gentleman abused, who went into his Chamber, and beeing weary of this world (seeing where he had put onely his trust, he was deceiued) he was minded to fall vpon his sword, and so end all his miseries at once: but his better Genius perswaded him contrary, and not so (by laying violent hand on himselfe) to leape into the Diuels mouth. Thus being in many mindes, but resoluing no one thing, at last he concluded to punish her with death, which had deceiued his trust, and himselfe vtterly to forsake his house and lands, and follow the fortunes of King Henry. To this intent he

called

called his man, to whom he said; George, thou knowest I have ever held thee deare, making more account of thee, then thy other fellowes, and thou hast often told me that thou diddest owe thy life to me, which at any time thou wouldest bee ready to render vp to doe me good. True Sir, (answered his man) I said no more then, then I will now at any time, whensoever you please, performe. I beleeue thee, George (replyed he:) but there is no such need: I onely would haue thee doe a thing for me, in which is no great danger, yet the profit which thou shalt haue thereby shall amount to my wealth: for the loue that thou beares to me, and for thy own good wilt thou do this? Sir (answered George) more for your loue, then any reward, I will doe it, (and yet money makes many men valiant) pray tell mee what it is: George (said his Master) this it is, thou must goe home, praying thy Mistris to meete me halfe the way to London: but hauing her by the way, in some priuate place kill her: I meane as I speake, kill her, I say, this is my command, which thou hast promised to performe: which if thou performest not, I vow to kill thee the next time thou commest in my sight. Now for thy reward it shall be this, Take my Ring, and when thou hast done my command: by vertue of it, doe thou assume my place till my returne, at which time thou shalt know what my reward is, till then gouern my whole estate: and for thy Mistris absence, e my own, make what excuse thou please: so be gone. Well Sir (said George) since it is your will, though vnwilling I am to doe it, yet I will performe it. So went he his way toward Waltam: and his Master presently rid to the Court, where hee abode with King Henry, who a little before was inlarged by the Earle of Warwicke, and placed in the Throne againe.

George beeing come to Waltam, did his dutie to his Mistris, who wondred to see him, and not her husband, for whom she demanded of George: he answered her, that hee was at Enfield, and did request her to meet him there. To which shee willingly agreed, and presently rode with him toward Enfield. At length they being come into a by-way, George began to speake to her in this manner, Mistris, I pray you tel me what that Wife deserues, who through some lewd behauiour of hers, hath made her Husband to neglect his estate, and meanes of life, seeking by all meanes to dye, that he might be free from the shame, which her wickednesse hath purchased him?

Why George (quoth thee) hast thou met with some such creatures? Be it whomsoever, might I be her Iudge, I thinke her worthy of death: How thinkest thou? Faith, Mistris (said he) I thinke so too, and am so fully perswaded that her offence deserueth that punishment, that I purpose to bee executioner to such a one my selfe. Mistris, you are this woman, you haue so offended my Master (you know best how your selfe) that he hath left his house, vowing neuer to see the same till you be dead, and I am the man appointed by him to kill you; therefore those words which you meane to vtter, speake them presently, for I cannot stay. Poore Gentlewoman, at the report of these vnkinde words (ill deserued at her hands) she looked as one dead, and vttering aboundance of teares, she at last spake these words: And can it be, that my kindnes and louing obedience, hath merited no other reward at his hands then death? It cannot be. I know thou onely tryest me, how patiently I would endure such an vniust commaund. Ile tell thee heere, thus with prostrate on the earth, and hands lift vp to heauen, I would pray for his preseruation, those should be my worst words: for deaths fearfull visage shewes pleasant to that soule that is innocent. Why then prepare your selfe (said George) for by heauen I doe not feed. With that shee prayed him stay, saying, And is it so; then what should I desire to liue, hauing lost his fauour (and without offence) whom I so dearely loued, and in whose sight my happinesse did consist? come, let me die. Yet, George, let mee haue so much fauour at thy hands, as to commend me in these few words to him: Tell him, my death I willingly imbrace, for I haue owed him my life (yet no other wise but by a wiues obedience) euer since I call'd him Husband: but that I am guilty of the least fault toward him, I vtterly deny: and doe (at this houre of my death) desire that heauen would powre down vengeance vpon me, if euer I offended him in thought. Intreat him that he would not speake ought that were ill on mee, when I am dead, for in good troth I haue deserued none. Pray heauen blesse him, I am prepared now, strike prethee home, and kill me and my griefes at once.

George seeing this, could not withhold himselfe from shedding teares, and with pitie he let fall his sword, saying: Mistris, that I haue vsed you so roughly, pray pardon me, for I was commanded so by my Master, who hath vowed, if I let you liue, to kill me: But

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I being perſwaded, that you are innocent, I will rather vndergoe the danger of his wrath, then to ſtaine my hands with the bloud of your cléere and ſpotleſſe breſt: Yet let mee intreat you (ſo much) that you would not come in his ſight (leſt in his rage he turne your butcher) but liue in ſome diſguiſe till time haue opened the cauſe of his miſtruſt, and ſhewed you guiltleſſe, which (I hope) will not be long.

To this ſhe willingly granted (being loth to die cauſeleſſe) and thanked him for his kindnes; ſo parted they both, hauing teares in their eyes. George went home, where he ſhewed his Maſters Ring for the gouernment of the houſe, till his Maſter and Miſtris returne, which he ſaid lined a while at London, 'cauſe the time was ſo troubleſome, and that was a place where they were more ſecure then in the Countrey. This his fellowes beléeued, and were obedient to his will, amongſt whom hee vſed himſelfe ſo kindely, that he had all their loues. This poore Gentlewoman (Miſtris of the houſe) in ſhort time got mans apparell for her diſguiſe; ſo wandred ſhe vp and downe the countrey, for ſhe could get no ſeruice, becauſe the time was ſo dangerous, that no man knew whom hee might truſt; onely ſhe maintained her ſelfe with the price of thoſe Iewels which ſhe had, all which ſhe ſold. At the laſt, being quite out of money, and hauing nothing left (which ſhe could well ſpare) to make money of, ſhe reſolued rather to ſtarue, then ſo much to debaſe her ſelfe to become a begger: with this reſolution ſhe went to a ſolitary place beſide Yorke, where ſhée liued the ſpace of two dayes on Herbs, and ſuch things as ſhe could there finde. In this time it chanced that King Edward (béeing come out of France, and lying thereabout with the ſmall forces hée had) came that way with ſome two or thrée Noble men, with an intent to diſcouer, if any ambuſhes were laid to take him at an aduantage. He ſéeing there this Gentlewoman, whom he ſuppoſed to be a Boy, aſked her what ſhe was, & what ſhe made there in that priuat place: To whom ſhée very wiſely and modeſtly withall anſwered, that ſhe was a poore Boy, whoſe bringing vp had bin better then her outward parts then ſhewed, but at that time ſhe was both friendleſſe, & comfortleſſe, by reaſon of the late warre. He being moued, to ſée one ſo well featur'd (as ſhe was) ſo want, entertained her for one of his Pages, to whom ſhe ſhewed her ſelfe ſo dutifull, and louing, that (in ſhort time) ſhee had his loue

above all her fellows. Still followed she the fortunes of K. Edward, hoping at last (as not long after it did fall out) to be reconciled to her husband. After the battell at Barnet (where K. Edward got the best) she going up & down amongst the slaine men (to know whether her husband, which was on K. Henries side, were dead or escaped) happened to see the other who had been her ghest, lying there for dead: she remembring him, and thinking him to be one whom her husband loued, went to him, & finding him not dead, she caused one to helpe her with him to a house there-by: where opening of his brest, to dresse his wounds, she espied her Crucifix; at sight of which her heart was ioyfull (hoping by this, to find him that was the originall of her disgrace) for she remembring her selfe, found that she had lost that Crucifix, euer since that morning he departed from her house so suddenly: But saying nothing of it at that time, she caused him to be carefully loked vnto, and brought vp to London after her, whither she went with the King, carrying the Crucifix with her. On a time when hee was a little recouered, shee went to him, giuing him the Crucifix, which shee had taken from about his necke: to whom hee said, God gentle Youth, kéep the same: for now in my misery of sickness, when the sight of that picture should be most comfortable, it is to me most vncomfortable, and breedeth such horrour in my conscience (when I think how wrongfully I got the same) that so long as I sée it, I shall neuer be in rest. Now knew she that he was the man that caused the separation twixt her husband, and her selfe; yet said shee nothing, vsing him as respectiuely as she had before: only she caused the man, in whose house he lay, to remember the words he had spoken concerning the Crucifix. Not long after, she being alone, attending on the King, beseeched his Grace to doe her iustice on a villain that had bin the cause of all the misery she had suffered. He louing her (aboue all his other Pages) most dearely, said; Edmund (for so had she named her selfe) thou shalt haue what right thou wilt on thy enemy; cause him to be sent for, & I will be thy Iudge my selfe. She being glad of this (with the Kings authority) sent for her husband, whom she heard was one of the prisoners that was taken at ỳ battell of Barnet, she appointing the other, now recouered, to be at the Court the same time. They being both come (but not one séeing of the other) the King sent for the wounded man into the Presence: before whom the Page asked him, how he came by the Crucifix? He

fearing

fearing that his Villany would come forth, denyed the words hee had said before his Maſt, affirming he bought it. With that ſhe called in the Maſt of the houſe where he lay, bidding him boldly ſpeake what he had heard this man ſay, concerning the Crucifix. The Maſt then told the King, that in the preſence of this Page, he heard him intreat, that the Crucifix might be taken from his ſight, for it did wound his conſcience, to thinke how wrongfully he had gotten the ſame. Theſe words did the Page auerre: yet he vtterly denyed the ſame, affirming that he bought it, and if that he did ſpeake ſuch words in his ſickneſſe, they proceeded from the lightneſſe of his braine, and were vntruthes.

She ſeeing this Villains impudency, ſent for her Husband in, to whom ſhe ſhewed the Crucifix, ſaying, Sir, doe you know, doe you know this? Yes, anſwered hee: but would God I ne're had knowne the owner of it? It was my Wiues, a woman vertuous, till this Diuell (ſpeaking to the other) did corrupt her purity, who brought me this Crucifix as a token of her inconſtancie.

With that, the King ſaid, Sirra, now are you found to be a knaue: did you not euen now affirme you bought it? To whom he anſwered (with fearefull countenance) And it like your Grace, I ſaid ſo, to preſerue this Gentlemans honour, and his Wiues, which by my telling of the truth would haue beene much indamag'd: for indeed ſhe being a ſecret friend of mine, gaue me this, as a teſtimony of her loue.

The Gentlewoman, not being able longer to couer her ſelfe in that diſguiſe, ſaid, And it like your Maieſty, giue mee leaue to ſpeake, and you ſhall ſee me make this Villaine confeſſe, how hee hath abuſed that good Gentleman. The King hauing giuen her leaue, ſhe ſaid, Firſt, Sir, you confeſſed before your Maſt, and my ſelfe, that you had wrongfully got this Iewell: then before his Maieſtie, you affirmed you bought it: ſo denying your former words: Now you haue denyed, that which you ſo boldly affirmed before, and haue ſaid it was this Gentlemans wiues gift. (With his Maieſties leaue) I ſay thou art a Villaine, and this is likewiſe falſe: (with that ſhe diſcouered her ſelfe to be a woman, ſaying) Hadſt thou (Villaine) euer any Strumpets fauour at my hands? Did I (for any ſinfull pleaſure I receiued from thee) beſtow this on thee? Speake, and if thou haue any goodnes left in thee, ſpeake the truth.

With that he being vaunted at her sudden sight, fell on his knees before the King, beseeching his Grace to be mercifull vnto him, for he had wronged that Gentlewoman: therewith told he the King of the match betweene the Gentleman and himselfe, and how he stole the Crucifix from her, and by that meanes, perswaded her Husband that she was a Whore. The King wondred how hee durst (knowing God to bee iust) commit so great villany: but much more admired he, to see his Page to turn a Gentlewoman; but ceasing to admire, he said: Sir, (speaking to her Husband) you dis the part of an vnwise man, to lay so foolish a wager, for which offence, the remembrance of your folly is punishment inough: but seeing it concernes me not, your Wife shall be your Iudge. With that Mistris Dorrill (thanking his Maiestie) went to her Husband, saying, Sir, all my anger to you I lay downe with this kisse. He wondring all this while to see this strange and vnlooked for change, wept for ioy, desiring her to tell him how she was preserued: wherein she satisfied him at full. The King was likewise glad that hee had preserued this Gentlewoman from wilfull famine, and gaue Iudgement on the other in this manner: That he should restore the money treble which he had wrongfully got from him: and so was to haue a yeeres imprisonment. So this Gentleman and his Wife went (with the Kings leaue) louingly home, where they were kindely welcomed by George, to whom for recompence hee gaue the money which he received: so liued they euer after in great content. How like you of this woman? Some praised her (as shee deserued) extraordinarily.

But (said the Brainford Fish-wife) I like her as a garment out of fashion: shee shewed well in that innocent time, when women had not the wit to know their owne libertie: but if she liued now, she would shew as vild as a paire of Yorkshire sleeues in a Goldsmithes shop.

But wee being come almost at Brainford, I asked if any of them would land there? They all cryed, No: perswading the two wiues that dwelt at Brainford, and Standon the Greene, to goe to King-stone, whither they purposed all to goe and be merry. Little intreating serued them: so putting their Fish-baskets aboord a Fisher-boate, they cryed, On to King-stone. I being well content therewith, set forward, and the Fish-wife of Richmond proceeded

in

in telling of her Tale: but first I will tell you what manner of creature she was.

The Fishwife of *Richmond*.

This *Richmond* Dame
Was voyd of shame,
She was a scold
At ten yeeres old:
And now was held
The best in field,
At that same fight
T'was her delight.
Her Husband kinde
(A silly Hinde)
Durst not gainsay
Or once say nay,
For what she crau'd:
For then she rau'd
And call'd him foole,
And with a stoole
Would breake his head.
Oft in the bed
If he her tutch'd,
His Beard she clutch'd,
And claw'd his eyes:
Yet in no wise
Durst he resist
Her cruell fist.
This Wife was yong:
Onely in tongue
She was deform'd:
Had that beene charm'd:
She had deseru'd
A King to ha' seru'd.

Her Tale.

NOt long agone, in a towne not farre from London, dwelt an old Widdower, which tooke to Wife a faire, yong and lusty Damozell, ouer whom his owne weakenesse made him iealous, so that continually his eye was on her, and she could not looke awry, but with most spitefull wozds he would reuile her, calling her so many Whozes, that it was impossible to make him so many times Cuckold: This poore wench liued so miserable a life with him, that she rather wished to be with the dead, then to liue with so froward, and such a doting old foole: but her wishes were in vaine, and her misery still increased: Foz he complained to her friends, how that she shewed not that dutie to him, which other Wiues did to their Husbands, but slighted him as if he had beene a stranger, and that shee delighted in other mens companies moze then his.

Upon this complaint of his, shee had likewise the ill will of her

friends, who told her they would continue her foes, till they heard she vsed her Husband with more respect. At this shee grieued more, then at her Husbands frowardnes, having their hate without a cause: and being one day at Church she made mone to her Pew-fellow (which was a wench that would not be out-faced by her Husbands great lookes) telling her how ill her Husband vsed her, for when hee was within doores, his eyes were neuer off her, so that she could not speake to any friend: and if he went forth, he would locke her in the house like Pusse-Cat; and euery night he locked the doore himselfe, laying the key vnder his pillow. Why, said her Pew-fellow, wherefore haue you hands, but to take the key when hee is asleepe, and to goe whither you will, onely you must be carefull to come in at the houre he vseth to wake: Fie, I am ashamed, that you haue no more wit: doe as I tell you, and since he barreth you of your libertie in the day, take it your selfe in the night: for company take no care, come to me; and if wee cannot finde sport to passe away the time, wee will sleepe for company.

This yong Lasse thanked her for her counsell, bowing to put it in practice the next night what soeuer did happen: so returning from the Church with her husband, she went home, where all the day she sate demurely in his sight, as she was wont to doe, yet could shee scarce haue one good word from him.

Night being come, he locked the doore as he was wont, & going to bed, he layed the key vnder his pillow, falling quickly asleep, which she perceiuing, softly tooke the same, opening the doore therewith: away she went to her Pew-fellow, where she remained that night, till three of the clocke in the morning, at which time her Husband vsed to wake: then comming home, she softly opened the doore, locking the same againe with as little noise as she could: then laid she her selfe downe by her good man, who when he waked, neuer mistrusted that his Wife had stirred from his side: This did shee many times, and neuer was so much as suspected for such a matter.

One night aboue the rest (her good fortune hauing made her bold) she tarrying a little longer then her houre, her Husband chanced to awake; who presently missing her, call'd her by her name, thinking she had beene in the house: he hearing no answere, rose and went about the house to looke her, but he could not set his eyes

on

on her, and to aske for her was in vaine, for his Cat could not speake, and he had no other to inquire of: for his Cat, his Wife, and himselfe, was all the household he had.

To bed went this old man againe, where hee looked for the key, but could finde none: there he lay, tossing and chafing himselfe, euer and anon fealing on his brawes, which he perswaded himselfe were in their Spring-time, and would shortly bring forth fruit: though the rest of his body were in Autumne. At length he might heare a noise, and lying still, he might perceiue his Wife come stealing to the bed, to whom hee said nothing, hoping one night to take her out of the doores, where hee would keepe her to her euerlasting shame, and giue the Parish notice of her night-walking: so taking no notice that he knew any thing, he vsed her that day very kindly, which made her to beleeue that the Prouerbe is true (Cuckolds are kinde men) for before she played loose with him, she neuer had that good vsage at his hand, as she had that day found.

This encouraged her to goe on in these her mad prankes, so that the same night she purposed to walke againe, which she did, taking the key from vnder his pillow (as she was wont to doe) she vnlocked the doore, and away she went to her Pew-fellow: hee perceiuing it (for he slept not for sleepe) went downe, and bolted the doore after her, so that she could not come in, but he must know of it: when he had so done, he layd him downe to sleepe.

His Wife ending her Reuels, at her vsuall houre, returned home, and very quietly assayed to open the doore: but perceiuing that it was bolted on the inside, her heart was dead (as a spent prodigals, at the sight of a Sergeant:) then repented shee that she had taken that wanton course, knowing a seuere punishment would follow her sweet pleasure: Thus shee, poore soule, stood at the doore shaking with feare, more then cold: but at last (hauing no other way to get in) she resolued to knocke: so laying her hand gently on the ring of the doore, she knocked twise or thrise before hee would heare her. At last, hee looked out of the window, asking who knockt at the doore? Tis I, kinde Husband, (answered shee) that haue beene at a womans labour; prethee sweet heart open the doore. All these kinde words would not get her admittance, but gained this churlish answere at his hands: Hast thou beene at a womans labour? Then prethee sweet heart returne, and amongst

the reliques of the wiues, help thou to deuoure the groning Cheese, and sucke vp the honest mans Ale till you are drunke, by that time 'twill be day-light, and I will haue thy friends at thy returne, who shall giue thée thankes for thy charitie.

The poore woman knew his wicked mind toward her; by these his mocking words, yet sought she to pacifie the same, saying, Alas, kinde Loue, these things are done already; therefore pray open the doore? No (quoth he) auaunt Whore; damn'd Whore, auaunt. Heere is no place, your labours haue not deserued such fruits at my hands: No, I haue taken you, you are intrapt, you are snared, your friends shall now know, and all the world see, that you are a most cunning Whore: therefore rest quiet, for there you shall stand till morning.

This sharpe answere of his kild her heart; but she quickly reuiued the same with a tricke which she hoped would get her admittance, which she put in execution after this manner: Am I rewarded thus (quoth she) for my charitie toward a poore distressed woman: and is this thy thankes thou giuest mee for all my care which I haue had of thy old and crazed carkasse? I see it is, therefore will I liue no longer, but presently will make away my selfe, and with my selfe thee, for the world iudging thee to bee author of my death, will giue thee the punishment that is due vnto a murderer.

At this the old man laughed, bidding her proceed. Which she hearing, tooke vp a great stone, going therewith to a Pond which was within a yards length of her house, and standing at the brink, said these words: Oh blessed element of water, it is thou which wast ordained to end my misery, and to reuenge me on my wicked husband: therewith hurled she in the stone which made a great noise: then placed shee her selfe hard by the doore. Her husband thinking shee had leaped in, and considering what danger hee might come in if shee was drowned, ranne hastily out of doore to helpe her: which his Wife seeing, stept in, bolting of him forth.

The old man stood a long time looking with his Spectacles on the Pond: but perceiuing nothing to stirre, hee thought her to be drowned, and with that cryed out he was vndone. Long inough might he cry, for no neighbours dwelt neere him: at length his

Wife

Wife pitied him, saying, Alas, good man, what wouldst thou have? He hearing it to be his wives voice, was glad thereof: yet continuing his churlish speeches vnto her, he bid her open the doore, calling her dissembling Susane.

To all this said she nothing: but at last shee tooke occasion to empty the Pil-pot on his head, and then said, There is some Cuckolds Urine to coole your tongues heat; Ile warrant thee it is right, 'tis of my Husbands making: so prythee, fellow, bee gone and let me sleepe.

This abuse of hers, made the old man to raile more then before: but at last, seeing he could get nothing thereby, shee gaue her good words, intreating her to let him in, and hee would forgiue all that was past, neuer letting her friends vnderstand of her night-walking.

She seeing him so meeke, said, Old man, I could well afford thee shelter in my house, though thou hast not deserued the same: but in so doing I shall breake my oath, for I haue sworne that thou shalt not come through the doore not this fiue houres: now to saue my oath, and doe thee pleasure (in taking thee out of the cold) I will open the window in the lower roome, that thou mayst come in that way. Her husband being glad any way to get out of the cold, thanked her for that kindnes.

Downe came she straight and opened that window: the old man glad thereof, thrust in his head, praying her to helpe him. She now thinking it time to bee reuenged on him, tooke hold of his Beard, and with her other fist batterd his face, and scratched him in such pitious manner, that the old man thought shee would haue killed him: and therfore pulling his head out of the window, he all be battered the Casements with stones, calling her a hundred Whores.

At this she laughed, and bid him bee a patient Cuckold, for his greatest misery was to come; so going to a backe window, shee espyed a Boy, whom she called, willing him to goe to such a ones house (naming her Pew-fellow) and intreat her straight to come and speake with her. The Boy doing her errand, her Pew-fellow came: to whom shee told (not without great laughing) the whole story of her good hap; willing her to goe to her Mother, and the rest of her friends, and (as she could well inough without her instructions) frame a complaint, how that her Husband of a

long time had vsed to goe on whore-hunting in the night: yet shee hauing no iust proofe of the same, was loth to speake: but now it was her hap to take him forth of the doores, where she would keep him, till they came to take some order that she might bee separated from him, for she feared her life.

With this Male rauns her Pesh-fellow to her friends (which dwelled not farre off) to whom she told such a pitious story of the miserable life their poore kinswoman led, with that knowne and proued old adulterer; that her friends moued with the wrong she sustained, got the Parson of the towne to goe with them to their kinswomans house, that hee might be a witnesse of her wrong.

When they came thither, they found the old man sitting at the doore, with a face more defaymed (with beating and scratching) then euer was any Witches. The Mother to this lusty Lasse, seeing him sit there with such a defaymed face, raised her voice to a high key, saying: Ah, thou old Knaue, thou Whore-monger, thou decrepit Letcher, hast thou alwayes complained of my Daughter, making nice, and other that are her good friends (not onely to reproue her, but more which I speake to my griefe) to hate her, for her neglect of dutie toward thee, when the fault was in thy selfe, when thou gauest her right to others? but see, now it is come home by thee, shee hath intrapt thee in thy snare; thou art come home with thy face mangled like a true Ruffian: now thou art the true Picture of a Brothell-house companion: thou hast the scales on thy face, which those creatures (called Whores) doe giue: thou hast, villaine, thou hast.

The wondring to see her Mother so against him, of whom he hoped to be righted, said: Mother, I confesse, these scales are the scales of a Whore; but of what Whore? Quoth of what whore thou wilt (quoth she:) thou knaue, hold thy tongue, confesse not heere, keepe that for the gallowes. Beare witnesse, good Sir Iohn, and the rest of my neighbours, that see how my daughter is abused: for I purpose to teach this knaue how to vse his wife better; and not to abuse her, and then threaten her with death, if she complaine: come downe my child, and speake for thy selfe, and let the knaue touch thee if he dare.

The young Wife liked this well, who came downe as her Mother bid her; & falling at her feet, intreated her (with fained teares) that

that she might be diuorced from her wicked husband, or else shee said her dayes were but short, for he assuredly would doe her a mischiefe.

Content thee, Daughter, (said her Mother) I will haue him consent to let thee goe, giuing thee that portion hee had with thee; or else I will sell Coin, Coat, house and all, to goe to Law with the Knaue. The old man (her Husband) perceiuing) that they were all on her side, and hain that they would not heare him speake in his owne defence: likewise thinking if that hee liued with his Wife againe, he must be a contented Cuckold, said, Will you heare this? Take your Daughter with you: and I will presently giue her that portion I receiued, and take all this wrong.

This pleased them all, so the Priest drew a Bill of diuorce betweene them, and the old man deliuered backe her portion, beeing glad that he was rid of his Wife. His wife on the other side was glad that she had escaped that punishment which shee deserued: so they all parted seeming friends.

I warrant (quoth the Fishwife of Braineford) this was a wench worth talking of; she deserueth as much praise as those women called Amazones, who out of a manly minde cut their husbands throates: and so made themselues rulers of themselues.

But what praise (quoth the wife of Standon the Greene) had shee deserued, if she had been discouered, or failed in this attempt? Nothing but curses in my minde, for she had giuen cause to all men to speake ill of vs women: it is not the event, but the honesty of the intent, that iustifies the action. I thinke so too, said a Fishwife of Twitnam, I neuer like this foolish hardinesse: and men are apt to speake ill of vs without cause: therefore to make amends, I will tell of a vertuous and chaste Dame, one whose life may bee a mirrour for all women.

The description of the Fishwife of *Twitnam*.

Not old, not young,
Not sharpe of tongue
Was this same Wife.
She lou'd no strife,
Nor much would prate,
But lou'd her mate.
Yet lou'd she lap:
If't were her hap
To meete with those,
She knew from foes,

She'd

She'd spend her quart
With all her heart.
Well lou'd she Masse.
Her time she'd passe
In working good:
If neighbours stood
In neede of ought
She sold or bought,
They should it haue,
If they did craue.
This Wife mannerly
Spake thus soberly,

Her Tale.

SOmetime in Brittaine there raigned a mighty Prince, called Oswald, who for his iust gouernment and holy life, had the name of Saint giuen him. This Oswald tooke to his wife a vertuous Maiden, named Beblam, daughter to Kynygils King of West-Saxons: by whom he had one sonne, after whose birth they willingly agreed (that they might the better serue their Sauiour) not to touch one the other after any carnall manner.

Thus liued this vertuous couple, vntill their deaths, onely esteeming the seruice of God, and the auoiding of worldly tentations for their chiefe pleasure. A Hermet being enuious at the report of his holy life, one day went to him, asking the King how hee could liue so holy, and yet liue with a Wife? To whom the King answered: Marriage is no hinderance to holy life, for therein doe we but follow the institution of God, which hee ordained for the increase of the world: but further to satisfie thee, that it is no hinderance to my holy life; take thou this Ring, and goe to her, bidding her vse thee as she would vse my selfe.

The Hermet glad of this (hoping to haue kinde entertainment at his Queenes hands) went merrily to her, deliuering her the Ring: and told her, that it was her Husbands will that she should vse him in all respects as shee would vse himselfe, if hee were there.

To this the Queene was willing, and bid him welcome, telling him he should be serued in all points as the King her Royall husband was. When the time of supper was come, and the Hermet expected some delicate cheere, he onely was fed with bread, which was serued vp in a stately manner, by diuers Gentlemen that did attend him: likewise when he called for drink, they gaue him wholesome water to coole his hote desires: no other cates got hee, yet

was

was it no worse then the Queene her selfe ate of.

This stately seruice, and homely fare, scarce pleased the Hermet, yet still he hoped for better, but his hopes were vaine, for the cloth was taken vp; and one asked him if hee pleased to goe to bed? To this hee was willing, hoping now to sleepe out the remembrance of his hard fare: but being come to his Chamber, a sodaine ioy extinguished the griefe he would haue slept out; for he saw no worser woman then the Queene should be his bedfellow. So quickly vndressing himselfe he went in bed to her (not forgetgetting in his thoughts to praise her for obeying her Husbands will) where hauing lyne a while, thinking of some strange things, lust and the euill disposition of his minde beganne to infect his soule so, that with a kinde imbrace hee besought the Queene to shew some mercy towards his hot affection.

This vertuous Queene seeing this Hermet basely lasciuious, rung a Bell: then presently came in foure women, who tooke this Hermet and cast him in a Cisterne full of water, that stood in the Chamber: he being well cooled, they tooke him forth, placing him in the bed as they found him. There hee lay shiuering with cold a good space; but at length his blood being heated, hee fell to thinking with himselfe: how perchance the Queene shewed her selfe thus chaste, to take suspition from her women, and that she might all the night after play the wanton securely: His burning Lust, seconding this Opinion, made him once more venter a bucking: so turning himselfe to the Queene, he began with this speech:

Most rare, beauteous, admirable, and vnparalelled woman, I will not onely commend thee for thy beauty, and greatnesse of Birth and place; but also I will adore thee with more then humane worship, for the extraordinarie vnderstanding which thou hast aboue others of thy sexe. With what a graue and sober carriage doest thou hide thy hote affections, which inwardly doe burne thee? Oh it is strange! therewith not onely blinding the eyes of strangers, but also thy neerest attendants: now I conceiue why thou commandest mee to bee hurled in the water Cisterne, it was thy policy (thou wonder of thy sexe) to auoid suspition in thy seruants.

I knew this well, and therfore did willingly endure the same,

that I might the more freely enioy thy beauty now: therewith 'gan he to clip her in his armes; which shee perceiuing, rung the Bell: her women presently comming in, tooke this Youngster, ducking him twise so much as they did before, so that they laid him in the bed halfe drowned: and hauing done, presently voided they the Chamber.

The Hermet being come to himselfe, had a better opinion of K. Oswald & his Wife, for he then held them for the holyest people in England: and his hote blood being cooled, he lay still that night, not daring to stirre, lest shee giuing the alarum, his enemies would come vpon him and put their crueltie in execution.

The morning being come, hee kindely tooke his leaue of the Quéene, telling her he had sufficiently tryed the Kings seuere and holy life, and would euer after giue testimonie of the same: so went he to his Cell, being ashamed of this his foolish attempt, and neuer after would looke into other mens liues, but mended his owne.

She hauing ended her Tale, they all said, This Queene was a vertuous woman, and worthy to bee had in memory, but shee was not to be any president for them, seeing shee was a Queene, and they were but Fishwiues.

Truely (quoth a Fishwife of Kingstone that sate next to her) if wee would be thus chaste, alas, our husbands would not suffer vs to continue so; therefore, for my part, I will never goe about it: I will tell you a Tale of one that was a great woman (though she was no Queene) and yet kept a friend besides her husband.

The description of the Fishwife of *Kingstone*.

This *Kingstone* wife,
Lou'd little strife.
She was a bottle,
That lou'd to tottle
The Ale pot round.
Few was there found
Could with her drinke,
But they would winke,
And fall asleepe:
Till she would creepe,
She'd not giue ore,
But call for more.
Louing the pot,
All lost she not:

For

For she had got
A nose full hot,
And red as bloud.
Within it stood,
Di'monds shining.
Lower declining,
Stood a Rubie:
If I true be,
There were more
Then halfe a score,
Which shewed like
The sparkes you strike,
From forth a flint:
Such heat was in't.
Men might suppose,
(Seeing her nose)
What broth she lou'd.
When she had mou'd
Her selfe, and spit,
She spake this writ.

Her Tale.

A Certaine great Lady, having to her husband a man old and vnfit to satisfie her youthfull desires, asked her Confessor whether she might not enioy (her desire being hot, and her husband vnable) a friend which might supply her want, caused by her husbands weakenesse: The Fryer (hoping shee would make choise of him) told her she might, for the sinne was but little, and did deserue little or no penance. She thanked him for this kinde absolution, telling him she onely toke this carefull course, that her husband might not die without issue, having his memory buried with him in the dust.

The Priest (still hoping he was the man she would select) said, her care was good, and no whit offensiue, if she chose a friend that would keepe it from the world. She said, her diligence would choose such a one, and so they parted: the Priest being still in the minde that he should be the man.

But this Lady meant otherwise: for she chose a Gentleman that sometime had beene a suter vnto her, who louing her dearely, and she him, they enioyed each others company without suspect of any, onely two of her trusty seruants knowing of it.

The Priest perceiuing he was not the man appointed for this businesse, vexed himselfe in thinking what a foole he was, that he did not make proffer of his seruice, when shee first opened her minde vnto him. Thus thinking of her beauty, and his neglect, hee vowed to performe something which might giue him content; with this resolue went hee to a pleasant walke thereby,

where oftentimes the Lady vsed; there hauing obscured him selfe, he might perceiue her with her Louer comming that way. He lying close, and listening to heare something that might bee for his aduantage: amongst other things he heard her aske, why hee had chosen Hercules for his watch-word, seeing there were many words, and names, which were more proper to that business? The Priest stayed not to heare his answer, (thinking he had enough in knowing of that word which had the power to bring him to her bed) but closely got him home, waiting the comming of night, which he prayed might hasten on, that hee might inioy the pleasure he so wished for.

To be short, her friend and shee parted when they saw time, and night being come, she went to bed, where she lay alone: (for her old husband was at Court:) long had she not lyen there: but the Priest (being well acquainted with all the turnings in the house) came to her Chamber doore and knockt: She asked who was there? Hercules, quoth the Priest. With that she rose, and (thinking it to be her Sweet-heart) let him in. The Priest caught her in his armes, kissing and vsing other dalliance, so long, till hee had fully satisfied his hot desires: Then quietly tooke hee his leaue without words, which she wondred at.

Long had he not been gone, when came her Sweet-heart, who softly knocked at the Chamber doore: she hearing it, asked who was there? Hercules, said he. She wondring at his sudden return, opened the doore, and asked him why hee came? To enioy thy sweet company (said hee) and to passe away this night in such sports as shall content vs both.

She wondring to see him, and hee not knowing what shee meant, (and thinking she mis-doubted his loyaltie) prayed her to tell him the meaning of those words, which seemed more strange to him, then rattling Welch, or wilde Irish: and he protested likewise, that but euen then he came from his Chamber.

The Lady now knew that shee was deceiued; and that some craftie knaue had got at her hands a more then ordinarie kindnesse: and 'cause he should suspect nothing, she told him that shee dreamed she had inioyed his company that night, and that he parted from her after an vnkinde manner.

But, said he, dreames are but false shaddowes: now hast thou

the

the substance those shaddowes did present. With such loving words passed they the night: and morning being come, her friend kindely tooke his leaue, secretly going to his Chamber.

She being vexed in her minde that she was deceiued, and not knowing by whom, passed away that day, hoping ere long to entrap her cunning Louer.

Night being come, after her vsual maner she went to bed, where she had not long beene, but the Priest (his appetite being rather sharpened, then any way slacked) came to the doore, softly knocking. She hoping it was he she looked for, went to the doore, demanding who was there? Hercules, said the Priest: she knowing it to be him (by his voice) that had deceiued her, prayed Hercules to come in and act a new labour: and vnder colour of vsing him kindely, she felt by the short haire on his head, that it was the Priest.

Being glad she had found her so officious friend, she intreated him to repose himselfe on the bed, till shee cleered the house of some seruants that she heard vp in the next roome: to which the Priest was very willing, being loth to bee descryed at his going forth by any of the houshold seruants.

But shee had another meaning: for shee called vp her two seruants, seruants which she trusted with her chiefe secrets, bidding them go into her Chaber, where they should find the Priest, whom they should binde, and with a sharpe knife (which shee gaue to them) cut out one of his genitours. They obeying her command, rushed into the Chamber, where they found the Priest (fearing the noise be heard) crept vnder the bed, whom they drew out by the heeles, and bound his hands, and feete. The Priest seeing them handle him thus roughly, intreated them to forbeare, saying, he was a Church-man, and it was sacriledge to offer him violence. He seeing this preuailed him nothing, set out his throat: but they soone stopped the same, and with a sharpe knife, and a quick hand, made him lighter by a stone.

Then called they their Lady, who seemed to pitie Sir Iohn, and bid them binde vp his wound, putting thereto salue which she gaue them. They hauing done this, shee hung a paper about his neck, bidding them vnbinde him, and turne him forth the doores: which they performed, and shutting the doore after him,

they went to bed laughing. The poore Priest hyed him home, getting to bed, where he tooke little rest for the paine hee felt; but he passed away the night in cursing the Lady, on whom hee could not tell how to be reuenged. The morning being come, hee espyed the writing which hung about his neck; hee opening the same, found therein this written:

Priest, if that thou chance to tell,
What pleasure through thy wit befell:
Likewise report not without care,
What thou hast lost, and what they are:
But neuer grieue there's none that can,
But must confesse th'art halfe a man.
But leaue thy riding, lest that stone
Be carued too, then hast thou none.
So Sir, farewell: th'ast made amends,
For thy deceit and we are friends.

At this the Fryer bit his lip, wishing he had as much power ouer her life, as he had ouer that paper: but not knowing how to mend himselfe, but by looking to his wounds, hee rested himselfe content, and ventured to deale no more with the Lady who inioyed her friend quietly, being neuer after troubled with the Fryer.

Now tell me (quoth this Fishwife) if this Lady bee not as much praise-worthy for her wit, as the other was for her honestie? All of them confirmed her argument to be sound, & the rest confirmed it by their silence. Then the last Fishwife which was of Hampton, said, but for a woman out of the abundance of her wit, to abuse any man, or her selfe, in such dishonest courses, I thinke it not good: 'cause oftentimes the harme which shee intendeth, and the shame which shee deserueth, lighteth on her selfe: which I will make good by this example.

The description of the Fishwife of *Hampton*.

This same creature
Had a feature,
Would haue mou'd
A man to lou'd.

A body ſound.
A face full round.
A forehead hye.
A full blacke eye.
A ſoft bright haire.
A skin full faire.
A colour ruddy:
And not muddy,
A chin dimpled.
Noſe not pimpled.
She had a lip,
Would make one skip,
To haue a bit:
So ſweet was it.
Shee'd not lowre.
And looke ſowre.
Nor in feaſting,
Be proteſting
She was no ſuch:
But ſhee'd bide ſuch.
Beauties rich ſtore,
And eke much more
Of honeſt goodneſſe:
And hated lewdneſſe.

Her Tale.

IN Deuonſhire (ſometime) there dwelt a maiden, to whom nature (hauing beene ſomething liberall) gaue ſuch beauty, that ſhe in all mens iudgements was held the comelieſt and faireſt creature in all theſe parts: ſhe being a right woman, tooke notice of her good parts, & withall grew ſo proud, that ſhe rewarded all thoſe which honeſtly ſought to enioy her loue, either with ſcoffes or vnkinde denials.

A young Gentleman of that countrey, long time loued this ſame vnkind and vnmatched creature, but neuer could he receiue better comfort at her hands, then vnkinde anſwers, or ſcornefull lookes. One day (not willing to liue longer betweene hope and feare) hee reſolued to haue of her either a flat denial, or firme grant; and with this reſolution went to her, to whom he ſpake after this manner:

Faire Milliſant, long time (amongſt other of your ſuters) haue I dearely loued you, yet neuer did I receiue the leaſt token of acceptance at your hands: diſdaine you my Birth? I am a Gentleman, though not deſcended of the higheſt houſes, yet not of the meaneſt. Miſlike you my wealth? I haue enough to maintaine a priuate Gentleman. Miſlike you my parts of body? They are as nature gaue them, I could wiſh they were more pleaſing to your minde. Doe you miſ-doubt my loue to you? Set mee ſome taſke in mans poſſibility to performe, and it ſhall confirme the ſame.

Tell me for what it is you cannot loue me, and I will reforme the same, and by fashioning my selfe to your liking, giue you testimonie of my loue.

No whit was she moued with his pure loue, but after her vsuall manner determined to abuse the same; and to that purpose she answered him thus:

Sir, such little libertie hath our sexe, and men such corrupt iudgements, that our mirth is counted immodestie, our ciuillest lookes lasciuious, our words loose, our attires wanton, and all our doings apish: to shunne these slanders, it behoueth vs to bee carefull ouer our selues, and not through our kindnesses to giue inconstant and dissembling men occasion to speake ill. I taxe not you with this common fault; yet haue I had no proofe that your loue is any other then dissembling; therefore till I haue made proofe of the same, by your obedience in executing my will, looke not for any kinde fauour at my hands.

These words gaue him some hope: and he being willing to expresse his loue to her, desired her to acquaint him with that taske whose performance would giue him that great happinesse of her loue: and he vowed to vse it, excepting no danger.

She seeing him thus blinde with her loue, that for her sake hee would vndergoe any danger, with a cruell and vnmerciful heart vttered these words: Sir, I shall try you whether your loue is of that pureneſſe you praſſe it for; I charge you, as euer you did respect me, or hope to inioy me, for this two yeares comming to keepe a voluntary silence, not speaking to any creature liuing, or to sing, or vse any kinde of sound, whereby your meaning may be vnderstood: this is my pleasure, which if you performe not, neuer see me: if you will do it, let your silence and sudden departure be signe of consent.

The Gentleman hearing this vnkind taske, was almost struck dead with griefe, yet said he nothing, but obseruing her command, presently departed with silence.

Being thus silenced by that vnmercifull Maid, hee left his friends, and went into Cornwal, where he was entertained by the Duke (hee being an excellent Musician) to teach his children to dance and play on sundry Instruments wherein he had skill: In his seruice he bore himselfe so worthily, and vsed such diligence

in

[illegible] fearing the childe on that the Duke delighted in his com-
[illegible] other Gentlemen, and tought all the meanes
[illegible] ; but [illegible] all his cun-
ning was in vaine, and that the [illegible] did him no good, he caused
him to be published, that whatsoeuer could recouer his sperry, nine
hundred pounds should be their reward: but they not perceiuing
that yet should giue the Duke so much money, or else some time-
comment till they paid it. [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] one
word doe that which [illegible] Duke could not driue [illegible] with all
his cunning and [illegible]
[illegible]
into Cornwall, [illegible]
the cure, so [illegible]

The Duke being glad that [illegible] that would vndertake
the cure, [illegible]
set downe three weeks, and [illegible]
was vnable to [illegible]
did she begin her cure.

The Gentleman seeing his back-healed Lord come to be his
Physician, would neither by sight, or any more make knowne
that he had any remembrance vnto the Lady, but remained euer as
a stranger vntill the time was out, and then did [illegible] crauing
her pardon, in that she thought not to be of that worth and es-
timation, which she now had made of, and this would get re-
uenge most from him, which the seeing, intreated to breake that
rash and foolish vow he had caused him to make, & she would giue
him sufficient testimony of her loue: thus continued she the space
of twelue dayes, but could neuer get any thereof vnto at his
hand: she now fearing he would be reuenged on her, and by his
wilfull silence suffer her either to pay the money, or else to lye in
prison, with [illegible] and louing countenance said these words
to him.

Sir, whether you loued me (as you vowed you did) let not my
former [illegible] be any longer cause of your neglecting mee,
[illegible] are sufficient testimony of the griefe I haue for it, and
[illegible] to you as satisfaction for my former-

fault: Oh then be mercifull, [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] and that the [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] till they pass it. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] ving the Fryer, then this by [illegible] tleman, shee had deserued no more then this [illegible] doth.

It is true (said the Brainford [illegible]) and [illegible] cerues vs not, let vs leaue this pro and contra, let euery [illegible] on it owne bottome; and so our mirth [illegible] about one time; for yonder is Kingstone, whose large and conscionable pots are praised throughout England; who's Ale is of great strength and force, as our [illegible] Watermens [illegible]

[illegible]

braines can witnesse. Then since it is so neere, let vs not bee factious, and contend for trifles; but let vs seeke to enioy that which we came for, mirth; that best preserver of our liues: so land vs with all speed, honest Waterman.

They hearing her speake but reason, agréed to be ruled by her, and therefore gaue her the name of Captaine. With all haste (and ease) as I could possible, landed I my merry Fare of Fishwiues, who went straight to the signe of the Beare, where they found such good liquor, that they stayed by it all night: where I left them, and so ended my iourney,

Westward for Smelts.

FINIS.